

Every day, I am afforded an opportunity to make a difference in a person's life. I am proud that, over the past 4 years, we have assisted thousands of constituents, helping to return over \$4 million in earned benefits for the district. Those are lifechanging results that partisan bickering cannot take away.

Too often, the negative attacks and partisanship overshadow the issues that actually matter to American families. We desperately need a new era of politics with leaders who put their country before their party, who solve problems instead of pointing fingers, and who are committed to service.

While the outcome of this past election was not what I had hoped for for our State or for our Nation, there is still a window of opportunity for new leaders to make changes in America that our country is clearly yearning for. Much of the system is broken, from the money in politics to the corporate influences and the gerrymandering. There is too much outside impact influencing our election process.

I also agree that many laws and regulations could use adjustments to work better for the American people and for our country. But let us remember that the outcome of this past election was not a mandate for many of the policy actions that are being discussed right now. Instead, we saw a still-divided nation making it more important than ever that we have solutions that work for all Americans, not some Americans.

That is why I hope to see a new focus on tackling climate change, tax reform, investing in our infrastructure, rebuilding the middle class, improving educational opportunities, and protecting our country from the threats of cyber attacks and terrorism, all things I championed during my time in this Chamber.

But above all, I hope that we do not move our country backwards. That requires leaders who can unite us, not those using fear and lies to further divide this country. I will always be the first to say that we must work together—not as Democrats, not as Republicans, but as Americans. However, we cannot simply gloss over the hateful and divisive rhetoric that plagued our country this past year. The United States is better than this, and the world is watching.

As an eternal optimist, I am hopeful that our leaders will work together to begin to heal these wounds and move our country forward together, showing that we are stronger than those who wish to divide us. That is what I will keep pushing for and hope that our leaders in Washington will join me in fighting for what is right for the American people.

My commitment to our community, to the great State of Florida, and to our Nation will always continue. Thank you to my constituents, to my colleagues, and to my team for an honor of a lifetime, serving the Treasure Coast and Palm Beach here in the United States Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

CLOSING OUT THE 114TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DOLD) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Florida for his service here in this body and wish him well as he opens the next chapter of his life, and I certainly hope that we will stay in touch.

Mr. Speaker, today I come to the floor to really thank the people of the 10th District of Illinois for giving me an opportunity, a tremendous honor to become their voice here in Washington, D.C., to serve them here in the United States House of Representatives.

When I first ran for Congress, it was because I, as a small-business owner, felt the government was making it harder and harder for me to put the key in the door of my small business, harder for me to hire an individual, and I think they should be making it easier for me to do those things, easier for me to put the key in the door, easier for me to hire that next individual.

Today, Mr. Speaker, too many politicians and bureaucrats in Washington just don't understand what it takes to meet a budget and a payroll. We see a disconnect in so many people who are risking everything, who feel that the folks here in Washington, D.C., just don't understand. They feel that Washington has grown far too distant, become out of touch, and unresponsive to the real-world difficulties that families are facing each and every day. Too many people feel that government officials have forgotten who they actually work for, something that myself and my team never forgot.

□ 1815

Throughout my time in office, my team and I have gone to work each and every day to fix this disconnect. In just the past 2 years, we have held more than 1,000 events that we held back in the district with community leaders and constituents to listen, learn, act, and ultimately make sure that we were accessible so that those individuals felt that they had their voice in Washington, D.C.; that we did understand what they were encountering each and every day, whether it was up in Zion or north Chicago or down in Des Plaines or in Highland Park and Lake Forest.

We responded to over 50,000 constituents' letters. We helped over 1,250 families break through the red tape of government bureaucracy in order to help them with whatever it was that was plaguing them at the time. That really was because of the great constituent service that our team displayed day in and day out. We held five nonpartisan job fairs in order to connect 10th Dis-

trict jobseekers with good, high-paying careers that were right here in the district.

Mr. Speaker, I represent the fourth largest manufacturing district in the country, and manufacturer after manufacturer would let me know: I have good, high-paying jobs available, I just can't find people qualified to take those jobs.

Holding these job fairs was a critical thing in order to make sure people were able to make payments on their mortgage, to be able to make sure that there was food on the table. These actions made a real difference in people's lives for themselves and for their families.

Mr. Speaker, I have always said that there is so much more that unites us than divides us. Yet, when we look at Washington, too many people are talking about the gridlock. That is the stuff that sells newspapers. That is the thing that is on the nightly news.

Yet, people have to recognize here in this body, the people's House, and, frankly, across the Capitol in the Senate, that we are not Republicans or Democrats first, but we are Americans, first and foremost, and that we are all bound by the shared vision of wanting our communities and our Nation to succeed, to be safe, healthy, and strong.

That is why I have always sought to work across the aisle to tackle the most challenging issues facing our country. The results have proved that, when we work together, we truly can make an enormous impact on the lives of the American people, we can make their lives just a little bit easier.

When we think about what we have been able to do over the course of the last few years, I still remember time and again we would go to townhall meetings and we would go to events and talk to people, and they would ask: Is Washington working?

The answer was unequivocally: No, it is not working.

Yet, when we reminded them about some of the things that we were able to do over the course of the last 2 years when we worked together, most people were shocked.

We passed historic, bipartisan reforms to ensure that seniors will continue to have access to their doctors through Medicare. This fix ends a nearly two-decade-long stretch of short-term patches year after year.

Doctors would be concerned that, at the end of the year, they were going to get a 25 or 30 percent cut in their pay just for taking care of our seniors. Therefore, a lot of the doctors ended up saying: I am not going to take care of seniors.

Well, we came together in a bipartisan way and actually fixed that problem. We passed the first long-term surface transportation bill and infrastructure funding bill in more than a decade. Our efforts brought money flowing into Illinois to fix our roads and rails, reduce congestion, and make the daily

commute safer not just for the 10th District, but for communities all across our country.

We passed a historic education reform bill, which will improve the classroom experience for students in our community. The Every Student Succeeds Act reduced the Federal control and returned more power to parents so that they could actually make more decisions about their children's education, to the teachers, and to the local school districts, which is where the power should be.

I have to say that I am particularly proud of our Educational Advisory Board, which was chaired by Laz Lopez and so many others that contributed to that that were really instrumental in helping provide and in shaping some policy with regard to education in our office.

I am particularly proud of one of the provisions that actually made it into the reform bill, which I authored, which will bring literally millions of dollars into one of the neediest school districts in our country, the North Chicago Community Unit School District 187. Our effort actually put students ahead of the interests of others and we put partisan politics aside to make a real difference in their lives.

As a member of the House Ways and Means Committee, it was an honor to be part of an effort to develop and pass important legislation to reduce the tax burden on families across our country. Our work allows small businesses and families to have more certainty when it comes to planning, how they are able to expense equipment and do certain things that they want to be able to do when it comes time to planning, budgeting, and the like.

We ensure that critical antipoverty programs continue to receive the resources that they need to be successful while also injecting a number of new and innovative ideas into the conversation that will better help people reach their fullest potential.

I want to make special mention of the great work being done by YouthBuild, which is helping young men and women in Lake County. YouthBuild is a nationwide organization, but their Lake County chapter is one of the best. I recognize that I may be biased, but they are helping individuals that might have taken a wrong turn throughout an early part of their life, giving them real-world skills to be able to get on their feet and be able to move forward. I will forever be in their debt for doing really incredible work to provide hope for an enormous number of individuals.

Over the last 2 years, we secured robust funding for programs like the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative in order to protect what I believe is one of our greatest natural resources in the Great Lakes. Our bipartisan efforts bring us one step closer to ensuring that we keep this incredible asset, incredible resource clean for future generations.

We worked across the aisle to pass bills to prevent sex trafficking as well as ensure survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence have the resources that they need.

Most recently, we worked together to pass landmark legislation known as 21st Century Cures Act. In that bill was a bill that was certainly near and dear to many, and certainly to Dr. TIM MURPHY, in the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act.

So many are being impacted around the country, and this is something that needs our attention. This soon-to-be law also increases funding for the National Institutes of Health, which will speed up our efforts to find cures to many of the world's deadliest diseases while also delivering long-overdue reforms to address the gaps in our Nation's mental health system.

When we think about the National Institutes of Health, Mr. Speaker, we actually passed over the last 2 years the largest increase in funding for the National Institutes of Health.

I do believe that, if we want to try to reduce the costs of health care, one of the things that we are going to have to do is come up with cures for things like Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease and diabetes. We spend \$330 billion every year treating diabetes. If we came up with a cure, I am confident that we could put those resources to use in so many other areas.

Mr. Speaker, these are just a few examples of what can be accomplished when we set aside our partisan differences and decide to work together for the people that we represent.

Of course, another area we notably did on this is the issue of prescription drug and heroin abuse. There is one family in particular that inspired our team's efforts, which deserves, I believe, special mention.

In the suburbs of Chicago, Mr. Speaker, someone dies from a heroin overdose every 3 days. In Cook County, it is every day. They leave behind a family in grief.

I first met Chelsea Laliberte nearly 5 years ago. She grew up in Buffalo Grove, just outside of Chicago, with her brother Alex. Alex graduated from Stevenson High School. He played sports. He got good grades. He had a tremendous number of friends. Then, during his sophomore year in college, he started getting sick.

When Alex got sick, he would go to the hospital and get better and get back on his feet, at least for a little while; but a few months later, this would repeat. He would get sick and be admitted once again. It was a vicious cycle.

Honestly, his family didn't know what was going on. What we did finally find out is that Alex was addicted to prescription drugs and he was suffering from withdrawal, which brought him to the hospital. Then, in 2008, just a few days after final exams, Alex Laliberte overdosed and died. He was 20 years old.

As a father, I can't imagine the pain of losing one of my children to a drug overdose. But sadly, too many families have experienced this loss. Heroin abuse and prescription drug abuse is an epidemic that is impacting our entire country.

I worked with Chelsea and the Laliberte family to introduce a bill called Lali's Law, named in memory of Alex, that would increase access to an overdose antidote called naloxone.

Naloxone has already saved more than 150 lives in Lake County, Illinois, alone in just the last 2 years. This was really done by the initiative of Mike Nerheim and the police and so many people coming together. The police actually asked if they could carry naloxone because they were tired of showing up on the scene and seeing someone right before them die from an overdose.

When they agreed and gave first responders in squad cars the ability to administer naloxone, life after life was saved. So I do want to recognize Mike Nerheim and all those at the Lake County Opioid Initiative for the great work that they are doing, the lives that they are saving. This is something that, frankly, we are just starting to address and there is a lot more work, obviously, that needs to be done.

The World Health Organization actually says that with increasing access to naloxone, we have an opportunity to save over 20,000 lives this year. Working together, we passed our bill through the House and with overwhelmingly bipartisan support secured its inclusion in the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, which the President signed into law in July.

It is my sincere hope that, because of our efforts, Alex's lasting legacy will include saving countless lives, sparing families this unimaginable grief, and giving people all across our country a second chance at recovery.

While I am tremendously proud of the achievements that we have accomplished together, there is still, of course, so much more that needs to be done. The costs of taking care of our families, educating our children, providing health care, and saving for retirement have all become more burdensome in the recent years.

Misguided economic policies hold back our small businesses and entrepreneurs and too many families are being trapped in generational poverty without the opportunities for meaningful work or for a quality education.

As a father of three young children and the son of a schoolteacher, one of the most important issues that I have tackled during my time in Congress has been ensuring that future generations are equipped with the skills that they need to succeed. A quality education is the building blocks for literally everything that we want to achieve, from curing cancer and Alzheimer's to helping hardworking individuals secure a good, high-paying job.

Among the work that I am most proud of in this Congress are three important bills that we put forward.

First, we wrote the HELP for Students and Parents Act to make college more affordable, more accessible for literally everyone. Today, across the United States, there are \$1.3 trillion in student loan debt between 40 million Americans. Sadly, there are students in our community as young as elementary school who now believe that, because their families don't have the means to pay, they are never going to be able to achieve the dream of going to college, regardless of how hard they work. That is simply unacceptable and must change.

The HELP for Students and Parents Act is one measure that can improve by helping make employer contributions towards employee student loan repayment and the employer contributions towards 529 college savings accounts for a worker's child—the norm in American society.

Building on these ideas that are commonplace today, such as tax benefits that encourage employer-sponsored retirement accounts and health care, this legislation would update the Tax Code to reflect the financial goals of students and parents seeking to help with student debt. With only 3 percent of employers currently offering student loan debt repayment, this is a meaningful way to ease the anxiety of student debt and make college education more attainable for people all across our country.

Second, Mr. Speaker, we introduced the Stand Up for Students Act to level the playing field for low-income school districts that are being ravaged by fiscal mismanagement in my home State.

□ 1830

Sadly, for years, Springfield and the politicians there have taxed Federal money given to school districts serving low-income students in an effort to pay down debts created due to fiscal mismanagement. Under no circumstances should these politicians be allowed to use Federal money intended to help the most in-need schools to bail themselves out of a mess that they created through decades of irresponsible spending.

The Stand Up for Students Act would hold Springfield accountable and would ensure that we are giving the most vulnerable children the best chance at success by stopping this immoral tax on students who need our help the most.

And third, beyond education in the classroom, I want to underscore our efforts in advancing innovative anti-poverty measures that will connect hardworking people with a job. I introduced the Accelerating Individuals into the Workforce Act to help reform the way our country thinks about poverty and getting people back to work. With nearly 50 million Americans still living in poverty, we must demand a new and better approach.

The Accelerating Individuals into the Workforce Act helps those on welfare land a job. It does this by providing funding that will reduce the cost to an employer for taking a chance and hiring an individual who may be on welfare. This boost can make all the difference in the world for that individual seeking a job, and I am pleased that this legislation passed the House earlier this year.

Moving forward, I urge my colleagues in the next Congress to take up these three bills to help our students and young workers and individuals struggling to climb the economic ladder the educational opportunities that they deserve, and let's help people reach their full potential.

I also urge my colleagues in this body to take up other pieces of legislation. I certainly am hopeful that we can tackle immigration reform. As a nation of immigrants, we know that this is a humanitarian issue. It is an economic issue, and a national security issue that, frankly, must be tackled.

When we look at those, the DREAMers that are as American as many of us right here in this body, we want to make sure that they have an opportunity to stay here in our country, to be contributing members of our community, and to be able to continue to live their lives as they are doing right now. We want them to come out of the shadows and have an opportunity to succeed.

I also think we have an opportunity and a need to move forward on commonsense gun legislation, on background checks, because, again, I think the thing that we have to come back to, Mr. Speaker, is the idea that we want to focus on what unites us. Coming from the Chicago area, I can tell you what we have to do and what unites us is the idea that we want to reduce gun violence.

One of our colleagues here in the House, my friend, DANNY DAVIS, just lost his grandson just a few short weeks ago, an altercation in this young man's home over a pair of tennis shoes.

We have to step up and do something that, again, is not infringing on Second Amendment rights, but is talking about some commonsense legislation to make our community safer.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the difference that we have made on foreign affairs and national security, because one thing that I love about the 10th District is that there are so many great people who are incredibly knowledgeable and passionate about the strong alliances and the grave threats that we have overseas.

Beginning with my first speech here in this Chamber nearly 6 years ago, I have worked to stand against the Iranian aggression and Iran's pursuit of a nuclear weapon. For years, I have been a strong and unapologetic advocate for ratcheting up the sanctions and pressure on Iran. I have pushed for promoting human rights and democracy inside of Iran and have devoted much

time on this very floor to warn against agreeing to a fundamentally flawed nuclear pact with Iran.

I continue to believe that the Iranian nuclear agreement is a historic mistake that has emboldened our enemies and will haunt us for a generation. It has endangered our friends and, frankly, is just misguided. The same fatal flaws with the agreement that existed a year ago still continue to this day.

I am proud of our efforts to lead on this issue. I am heartened that our bipartisan majority in the Congress rejected this dangerous agreement, and I continue to call on Congress to lead the way in restoring a crippling sanctions architecture on Iran.

Mr. Speaker, I am also incredibly proud of our efforts to strengthen the U.S.-Israel relationship these past few years:

We have ensured robust foreign assistance so that Israel may protect its civilians from the many terror threats on its borders. We have fought to combat efforts in the international community, including in the United Nations, that seek to delegitimize Israel and wrongly pressure Israel to give up its defensible borders.

We have unequivocally condemned instances of Palestinian incitement to violence against Israelis. We openly and proudly welcomed Prime Minister Netanyahu's speech before the Congress last February.

And, of course, we authored legislation known as the Combating BDS Act of 2016, which has earned over 160 cosponsors in this body. This critical legislation, which I am hopeful will pass in the next Congress, provides a much-needed opportunity so that we may go on the offensive against the hateful Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement against the State of Israel.

While we do not know what the future will hold, or every upcoming challenge that we will face in the Middle East, I am confident that the United States will be best-served by continuing to strengthen our partnership with Israel, so that we can face these security challenges together, shoulder to shoulder.

Now, Mr. Speaker, none of our work in this Congress would have been possible without the incredible team that was truly dedicated to improving the lives of the people of the 10th Congressional District.

Now, that team starts with two great chiefs: James Slepian, who was the chief when we first came in this Congress, more of a quiet leader, very sharp, a quick wit, was incredibly instrumental in guiding us through some turbulent times; and David Stern, whom I consider to be a dear friend, and his advice and counsel is some that I cherish. He is a little bit misguided on his love for the White Sox, but we will forgive him on that. But the long and the short of it is a passionate advocate for the people of the 10th District and one who always has a smile on his face.

They helped lead an incredible team, along with my deputy chief of staff, Kim Brisky, who always had an opportunity to make sure that we stayed on the straight and narrow, who always was there for us when we needed a pick-me-up. And so, Kim, who is, I am sure, going on to bigger and better things, she was absolutely fantastic.

My deputy director, Philippe Melin, actually has been with me as long as anyone. And I will say that he may sometimes rub people the wrong way, but I have always appreciated his passion for the district, his ability to throw himself into any particular issue, to fight on behalf of children when it comes to education; whether it be building coalitions, Philippe has actually been super.

My legislative director, Matt Diller, is that quiet individual that made sure the trains were running on time.

Our communications director, Brad Stewart, probably held up a camera more times than I care to remember, and I apologize to him for messing up probably more times than I needed to. Ultimately, when it came to our social media and actually getting the word out, Brad was vitally important in making sure that our message was getting out to the people that it needed to.

We had an outstanding staff in Washington that worked hard to amplify the voice of each and every constituent, and Jordan Heyman, who was really focused on a lot of healthcare work, came to us from the campaign, but really rolled up her sleeves and was fantastic.

Noah Barger, Noah—or Jason, as he is sometimes referred to—always had a smile on his face, was probably one of the rocks in that office.

Chelsea Caulfield, who is truly the spark plug of our team, and would come into the office to see a smile from Chelsea, who made sure that I was where I needed to be and when I needed to be there.

Brittany Consolo, who came into our office. Time and again, people would always comment about how kind Brittany was, and so, for her, I say that we know that she has got a very bright future as well.

And the hardest working district office in the country:

Eric Miller, who really was what I consider one of the leaders of our case-work, is one of the guys that put his head down day in and day out. We would not be or could not have gotten to the 1,250 cases were it not for Eric;

Victoria Williams, who has a special talent when it comes to not only working with people and connecting, especially with those on domestic abuse and the like, which was an area that she threw herself into;

Peter Collins, who had more spreadsheets available than I think anybody else, but Peter, again, one of my favorite Hellenic individuals in the office;

Scott Lietzow was a passionate advocate and worked with our veterans day

in and day out and helped put our Veterans Advisory Board together, and he worked with them day in and day out to make a difference in their lives;

Allie Breschi, a proud Denison graduate, was helping Brad out in terms of our communications and did a super job;

Andy Chiero also worked with our veterans;

Alma Herrera, who, I think was really a dynamo, and we missed her as she went off to finish up some schooling;

Natalie Szmyd came in and filled the role and helped out with our Polish community;

Bobby Miller also was one of those individuals that exceeded expectations right from the beginning;

Jordan Richter and Nikki West; Ginny Wood, who helped out with our seniors; Justo Arellano and Martin Lopez really were absolutely fantastic in rounding out our team.

So again, I think you are only as good as the team that you have put together, and I am super proud of the team that I was able to put together, that really worked tirelessly on behalf of the constituents of the 10th District.

One of the things I am proud of is that lifelong Democrats would come up to us and say, you know, thanks for helping us out on this, and I think that we have got to talk to you about, you know, when you do something good for us. But ultimately, our job was, regardless of whom you are elected by, I made sure that our team knew that we represented 100 percent of the people.

This team really cared so much about the work that we were doing and made a real difference in the lives of literally everyone that they had an opportunity to touch.

But some people that I think are important to thank are my colleagues. This is a pretty remarkable place, with some really remarkable people, and I want to thank them for their friendship and the great work that we were able to accomplish together. I will miss them dearly, those on the other side of the aisle as well, because most of our legislation, almost every piece of legislation that we offered, was with bipartisan support. I kept telling my team, if we couldn't get those on the other side of the aisle to sign up, this bill wasn't going anywhere.

I also want to thank the people who make this body work, the unsung heroes, the folks down in the wood shop, the folks behind the rostrum, the people that make Congress work. Really, these are the folks that respect the institution, and the institution will move on 10 years from now and, we hope, hundreds of years from now.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the last group that I want to thank is my family. I have three beautiful children and a wife who is a saint to allow me to do this day in and day out. So, for Harper, Bobby, and Honor, thank you for giving up the time. I am sorry that I was not there, but we have a new chapter; and so we know, if this is the worst thing

that happens in terms of our time away from the Congress, we have great new things ahead for us.

And for my bride, Danielle, sweetheart, I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to do this. I know that you oftentimes were the one making sure that the trains ran on time back at home, and for that I will forever be grateful.

So from day one, this has been about working together to get the job done, making the Federal Government more efficient, effective, and accountable, and restoring strong American leadership on the global stage.

When I was growing up, my parents gave me a plaque that said: "Your integrity determines your identity." As a small-business owner, I learned that nothing gets done without teamwork.

□ 1845

If we want to achieve anything as a nation, we must commit to advancing commonsense, bipartisan solutions to break through this gridlock. That is why I am so proud to have consistently been ranked one of the most independent, bipartisan Members in the United States Congress. This commitment to genuine bipartisanship has been the key to some of our biggest successes that we have had over the last 2 years. It is also what has helped us to become effective on amplifying the independent voice for the 10th District of Illinois.

I strongly believe that America's best days, Mr. Speaker, are ahead of us. Together, I am confident that we can ensure a more prosperous and free future for our children and for future generations.

To the people of the 10th District, I offer my sincere thanks for the opportunity of a lifetime to be able to represent you in the United States Congress. It has truly been the greatest honor of my life.

To my staff, again, I want to say "thank you" for all that you do. It has been an honor to be able to work with you.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

THE FIRST 100 DAYS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, before I begin my remarks, I think it's only appropriate to congratulate, thank, and wish all the best to my friend, BOB DOLD.

BOB, you have earned a reputation around here. You may not know it, but I am going to tell it to you: I think you are the hardest working person here. I listened to a number of your accomplishments. It is not only representative of your thoughtfulness and your desire to serve the country, but it is